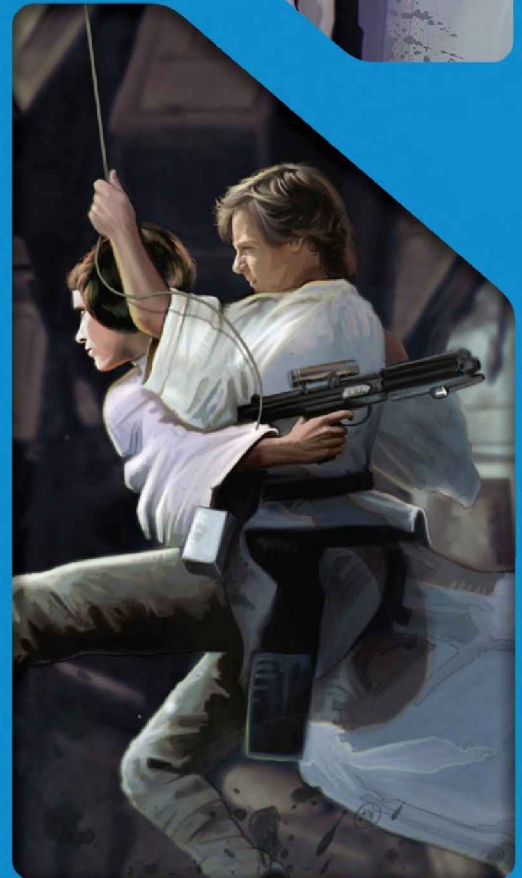


STAR WARS

A NEW HOPE



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"The Hero's Journey Begins" written by Trey King

"A Bad Feeling About This" written by Andy Schmidt

"The Rescue of Princess Leia" written by Elizabeth Schaefer

"Escape from the Death Star" written by Ivan Cohen

"The Battle of Yavin" written by Tracey West

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STAR WARS®

A N E W H O P E

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George Lucas

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Brian Rood

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Escape from Darth Vader

A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away, an old starship raced across space above the planet of Tatooine. Right behind it was a massive Star Destroyer of the Galactic Empire. Inside the fleeing ship, a tall golden droid named C-3PO rushed through the corridors, closely followed by his short blue-and-silver companion, R2-D2.

“We’re doomed,” cried C-3PO as laser bolts hit their starship. “There’ll be no escape for the princess this time.”

The droid was right. With a loud *CLANK*, the Star Destroyer had captured the starship!

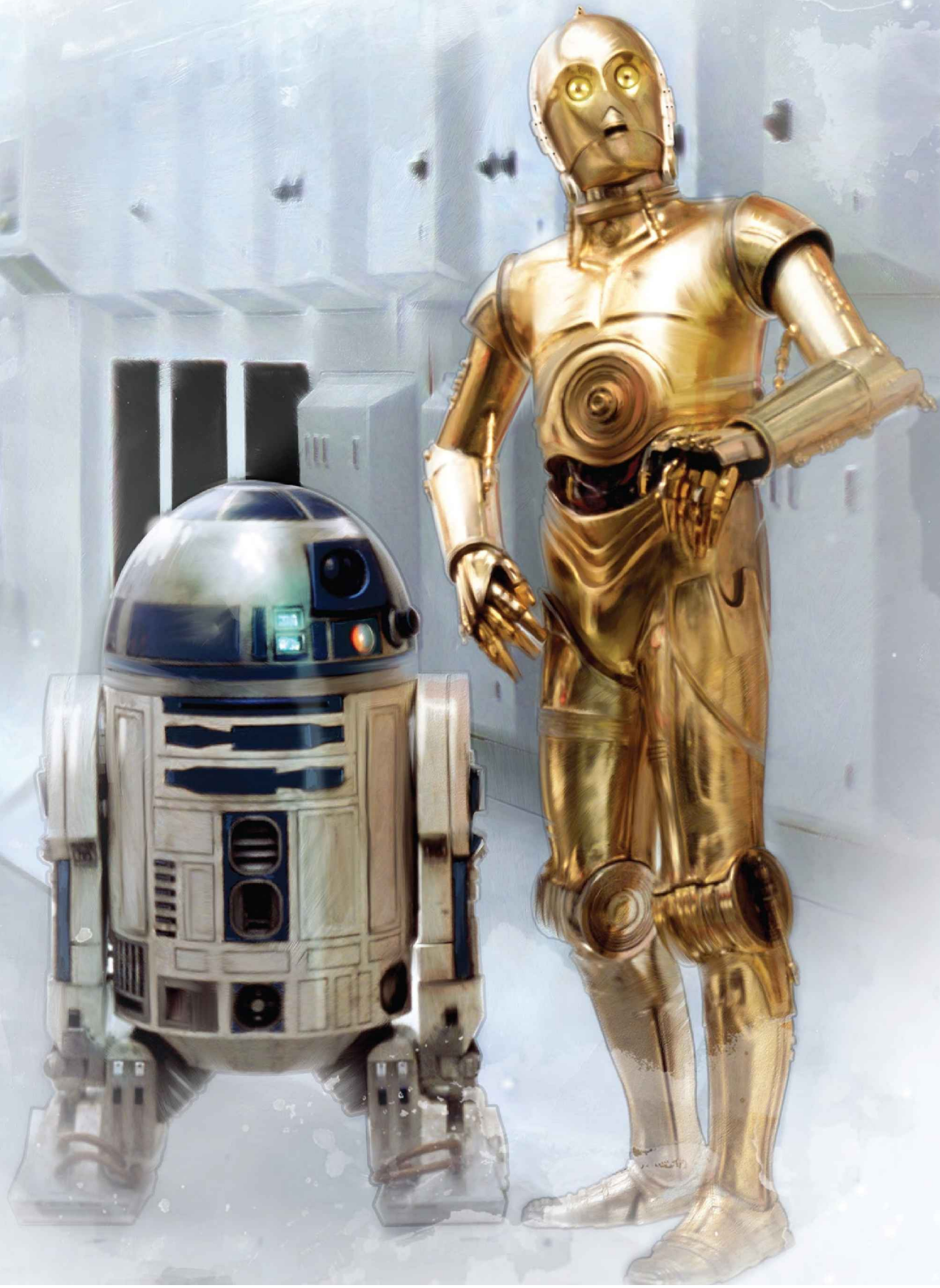






The droids watched as the crew rushed past them and stood guard over the ship's doors. The starship was about to be boarded!

The doors of the ship exploded, and white-uniformed stormtroopers rushed in through the smoke and started to attack. The droids tried to hide, but C-3PO cried out in alarm as laser bolts hit the wall next to him. R2-D2 beeped at C-3PO urgently. They had to get away before it was too late.

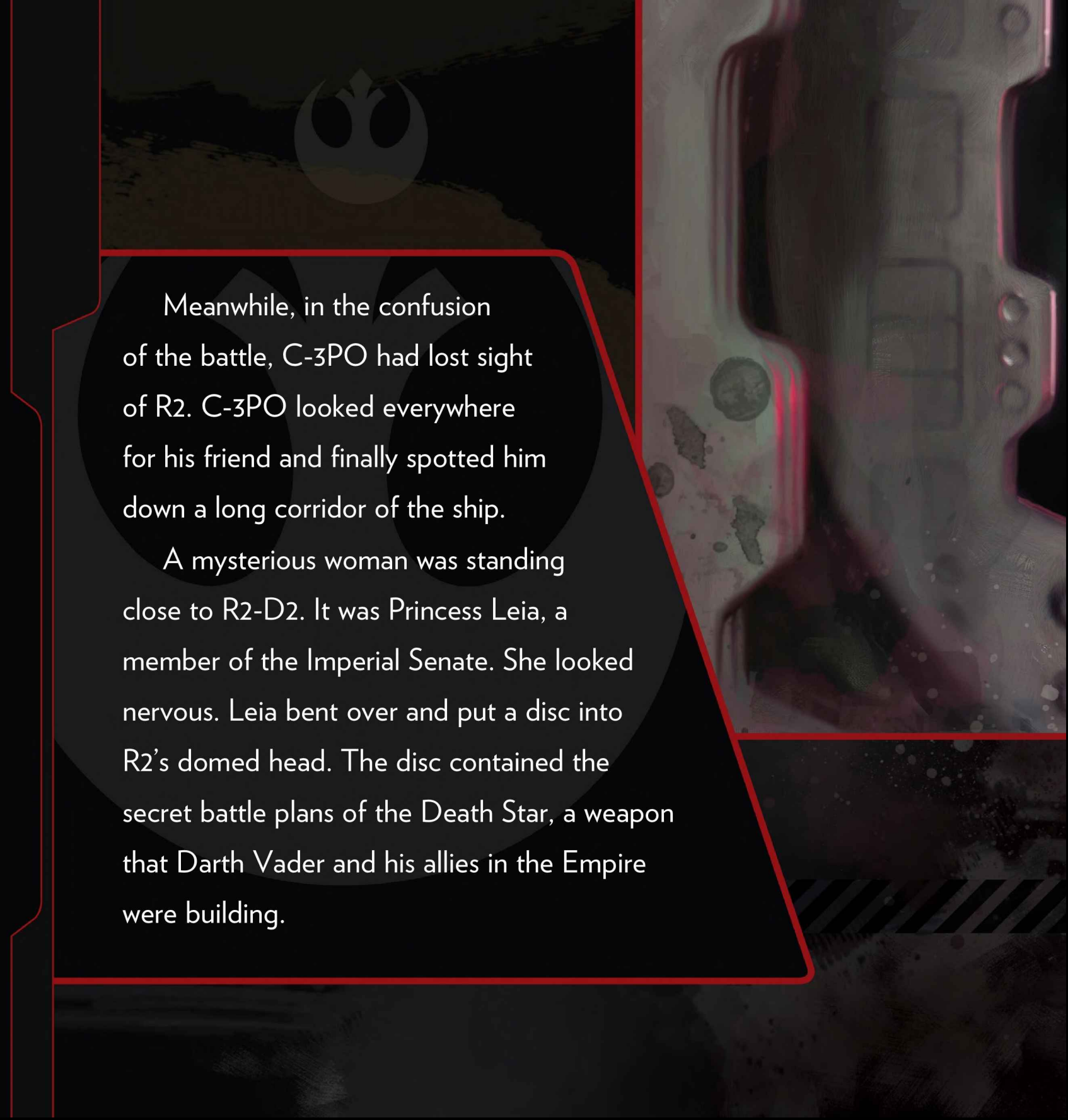




Although the ship's crew tried to hold the door, they were no match for the Imperial stormtroopers. As C-3PO and R2-D2 escaped deeper into the ship, a large dark figure stepped through the smoke. He wore a long cloak, and his body was covered with strong black armor.

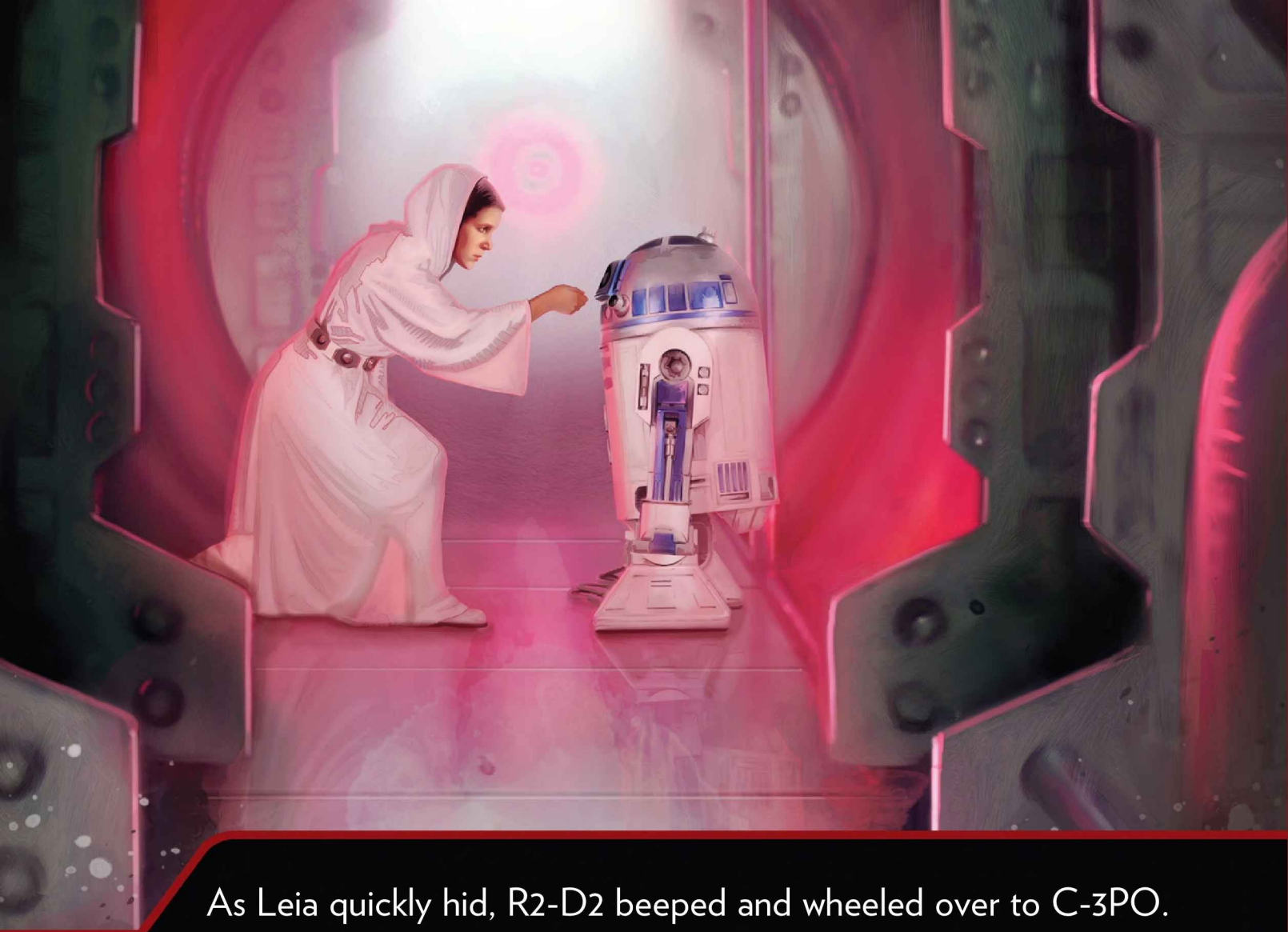
The stormtroopers quickly stood at attention and saluted the tall, silent figure. This was Darth Vader, a dark and powerful Lord of the Sith. Darth Vader stood and surveyed the captured starship, his mechanical breathing echoing through the corridors. Now that he had captured the Rebel starship, it was only a matter of time before his mission was complete.





Meanwhile, in the confusion of the battle, C-3PO had lost sight of R2. C-3PO looked everywhere for his friend and finally spotted him down a long corridor of the ship.

A mysterious woman was standing close to R2-D2. It was Princess Leia, a member of the Imperial Senate. She looked nervous. Leia bent over and put a disc into R2's domed head. The disc contained the secret battle plans of the Death Star, a weapon that Darth Vader and his allies in the Empire were building.



As Leia quickly hid, R2-D2 beeped and wheeled over to C-3PO. “At last! Where have you been?” C-3PO asked R2. Before the droid could answer, they heard stormtroopers drawing closer. R2-D2 whistled at C-3PO to follow him. They had to escape from the starship—fast!

Darth Vader and his troops stood before the captured crew. “The Death Star plans are not in the main computer,” a trooper explained.

“Where are those transmissions you intercepted?” Vader asked the Rebel officer. “What have you done with those plans?”

“We’re on a diplomatic mission!” cried the officer.

But Vader didn’t believe him. “Commander, tear this ship apart until you’ve found those plans, and bring me the passengers.”



Hidden away in a corner of the ship, Princess Leia watched as a group of stormtroopers crept closer and closer to her hiding place.

Princess Leia raised her blaster and shot at the troopers. She refused to be caught without a fight. But as Leia ran away, one of the stormtroopers' stun blasts hit her. Leia was captured!



The next thing Leia knew, she was being led before Darth Vader. “Darth Vader, only you could be so bold,” Leia said defiantly. She refused to tell Vader anything about the plans. She said she was a diplomat, nothing more.

“You’re a part of the Rebel Alliance, and a traitor. Take her away!” Vader told his soldiers. Darth Vader watched as two stormtroopers led Leia back to the Star Destroyer. If Leia didn’t have these plans, who did?



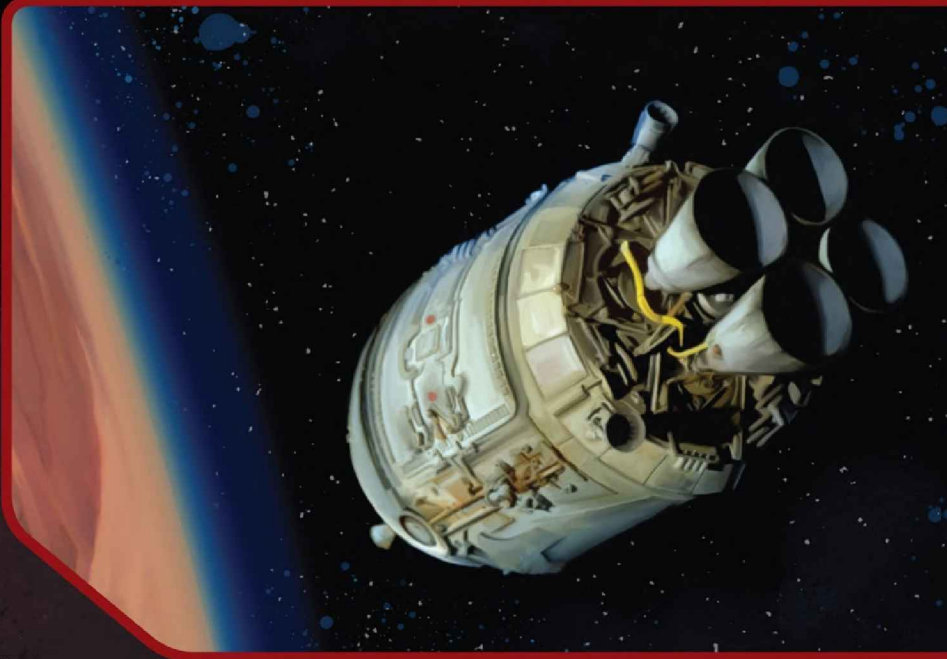
R2-D2 and C-3PO could hear the stormtroopers getting closer and closer. R2 whistled at C-3PO and explained why they had to hurry into an escape pod.

R2 was on a secret mission for the princess and had to get off the ship right away.

“Secret mission? What plans? What are you talking about? I’m not getting in there!” C-3PO said.

But a new explosion rocked the ship. C-3PO knew that if he didn’t follow R2-D2 into the escape pod, he’d be caught by the stormtroopers.

“I’m going to regret this,” he said as the escape pod launched away from the ship and toward the nearby planet of Tatooine.





When the escape pod finally landed, it opened up onto a desert. There wasn't anything or anyone for miles!

"How did we get into this mess? I really don't know how. We seem to be made to suffer. It's our lot in life," C-3PO said.

R2-D2 beeped in response and wheeled himself away from the pod. The droids had a long way to go. They were now the Rebellion's only hope to stop Darth Vader and the Empire's dreaded battle station—the Death Star. Their secret mission for Princess Leia had begun. . . .



The Hero's Journey Begins



For as long as he could remember, Luke Skywalker had wanted to go into outer space and be a pilot. Instead, he was stuck on the desert planet Tatooine helping his uncle and aunt on their moisture farm. Maintaining moisture vaporators that collected water to grow underground crops wasn't exactly the exciting life Luke had dreamed of.

Little did Luke know that when he joined his uncle Owen to purchase some droids, his life was about to change forever.

THE HERO'S JOURNEY BEGINS

The native Jawas escorted robots of all shapes and sizes out of their massive sandcrawler. Luke and Owen were looking for a droid that could speak many languages. "I'll take this one," Owen said, pointing to the golden protocol droid known as C-3PO. Luke also looked at a few astromech droids. Because of C-3PO's recommendation, Luke's uncle bought a blue one named R2-D2.





As he cleaned the dirty droids, Luke complained that he'd never get off the planet. "You boys look like you've seen a lot of action," Luke said.

"With all we've been through, sometimes I'm amazed we're in as good condition as we are," C-3PO explained, "what with the Rebellion and all."

"The Rebellion against the Empire?" Luke asked, excited.

As he continued to work on the small droid, Luke accidentally activated a hologram, which projected out of R2-D2. The image was of a young woman with a desperate message. "Help me, Obi-Wan Kenobi. You're my only hope," the message repeated over and over again.

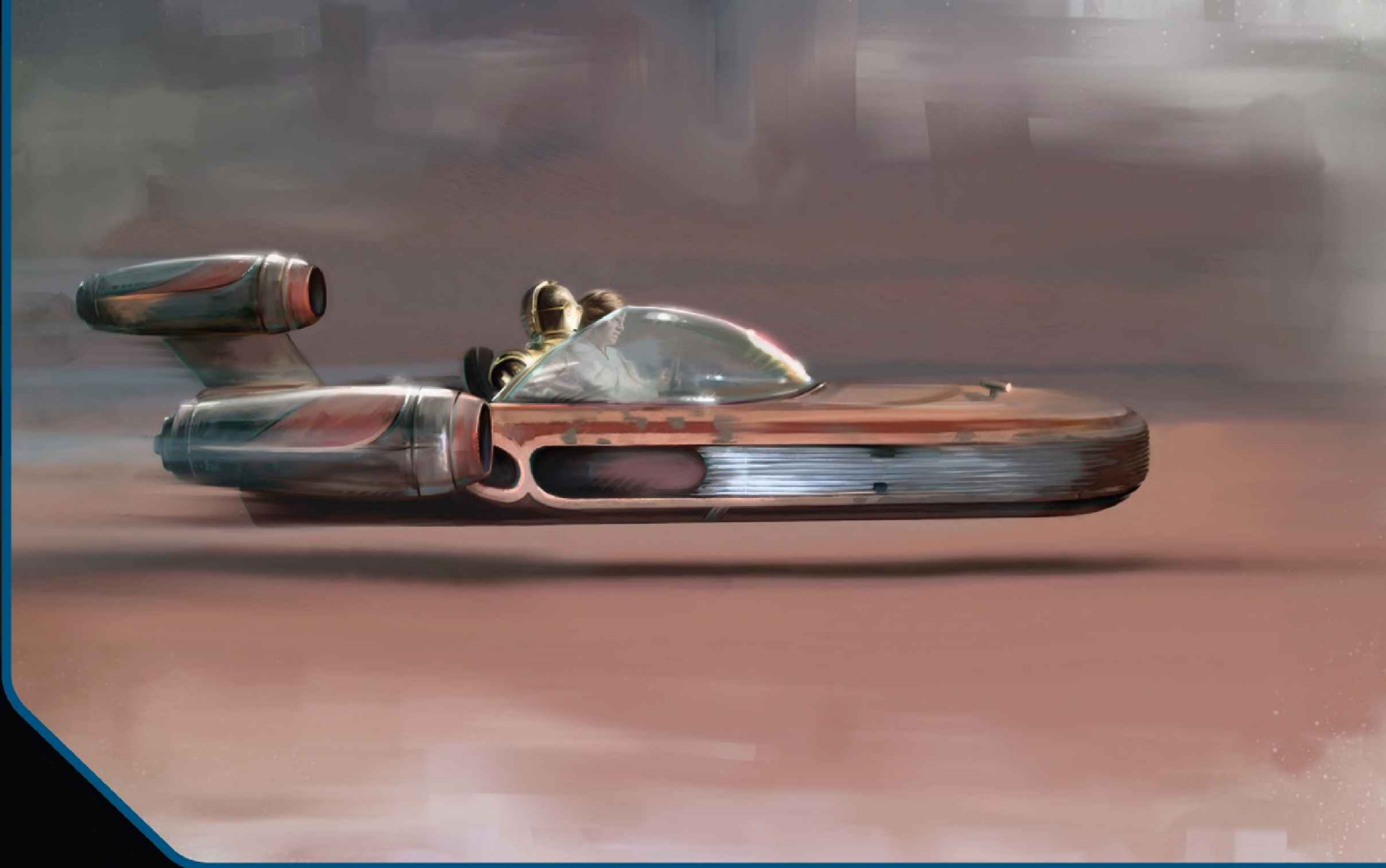
R2 beeped that the message was private and meant for someone named Obi-Wan Kenobi. Luke wondered if the person was related to "Old Ben" Kenobi, a strange hermit who lived in the nearby mountains.



Later Luke told his aunt and uncle that he was worried the droid they bought had been stolen and might belong to Old Ben Kenobi.

“That wizard’s just a crazy old man,” his uncle said. He wanted Luke to take the droids into town the next day and have their memories erased. Luke got curious when his uncle hinted that Obi-Wan had known Luke’s father. But Owen refused to talk about it.





When Luke returned to finish cleaning the droids, he discovered R2-D2 was gone! C-3PO confessed that the droid had left to find Obi-Wan Kenobi. It was too dangerous to go after him at night, so they had to wait until the next morning.

As soon as the two suns came up, Luke and C-3PO took off in his landspeeder. As they raced across the barren landscape, they tracked the droid on their scanner.

They followed R2's signal up into the rocky hills, far beyond the Skywalker farm. "Where do you think you're going?" Luke asked when they caught up to the little droid. But as they began to leave, R2 started beeping frantically.



"There are several creatures approaching," C-3PO translated.

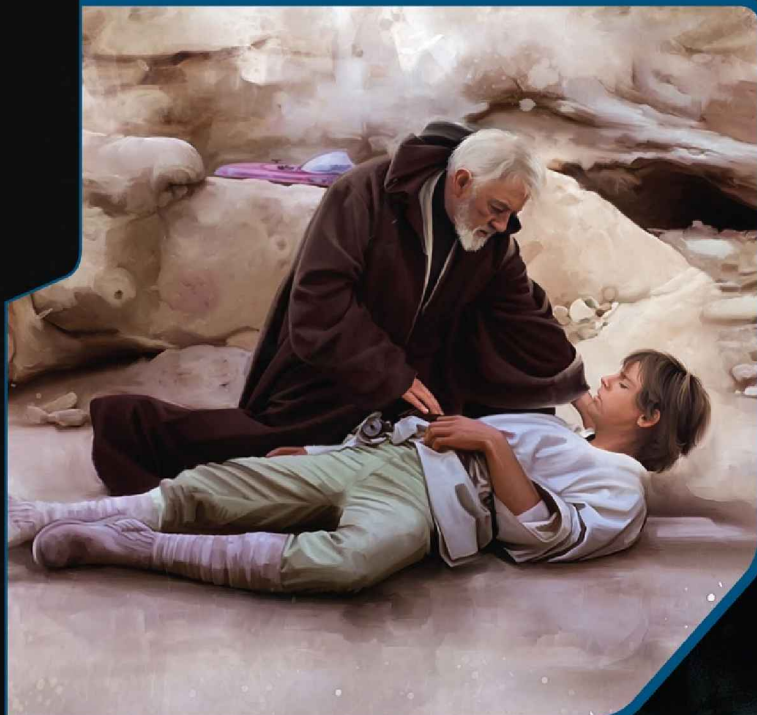
"Sand People," Luke said. "Let's go and have a look."

They didn't get far before they were attacked by the hostile Tusken Raiders. Luke was caught off guard and knocked unconscious.

THE HERO'S JOURNEY BEGINS

Scared, R2-D2 hid behind some rocks. The strange Sand People seemed to want to do his friends harm. They were raiding Luke's landspeeder when a cloaked and hooded figure appeared over the hill, making strange sounds. This scared the Tusken Raiders away. But was this new person a friend or another attacker?





The hooded figure leaned over Luke's body. R2 was worried, until the figure pulled down his hood to reveal the face of a smiling old man. "Come here, my little friend—don't be afraid."

The kind old man helped Luke sit up.

"Ben Kenobi? Boy, am I glad to see you," Luke said groggily. He explained why he'd followed the droid out there and asked if Old Ben was related to Obi-Wan Kenobi.

"Obi-Wan?" said the old man. "Now, that's a name I've not heard in a long time."

"You know him?" Luke asked.

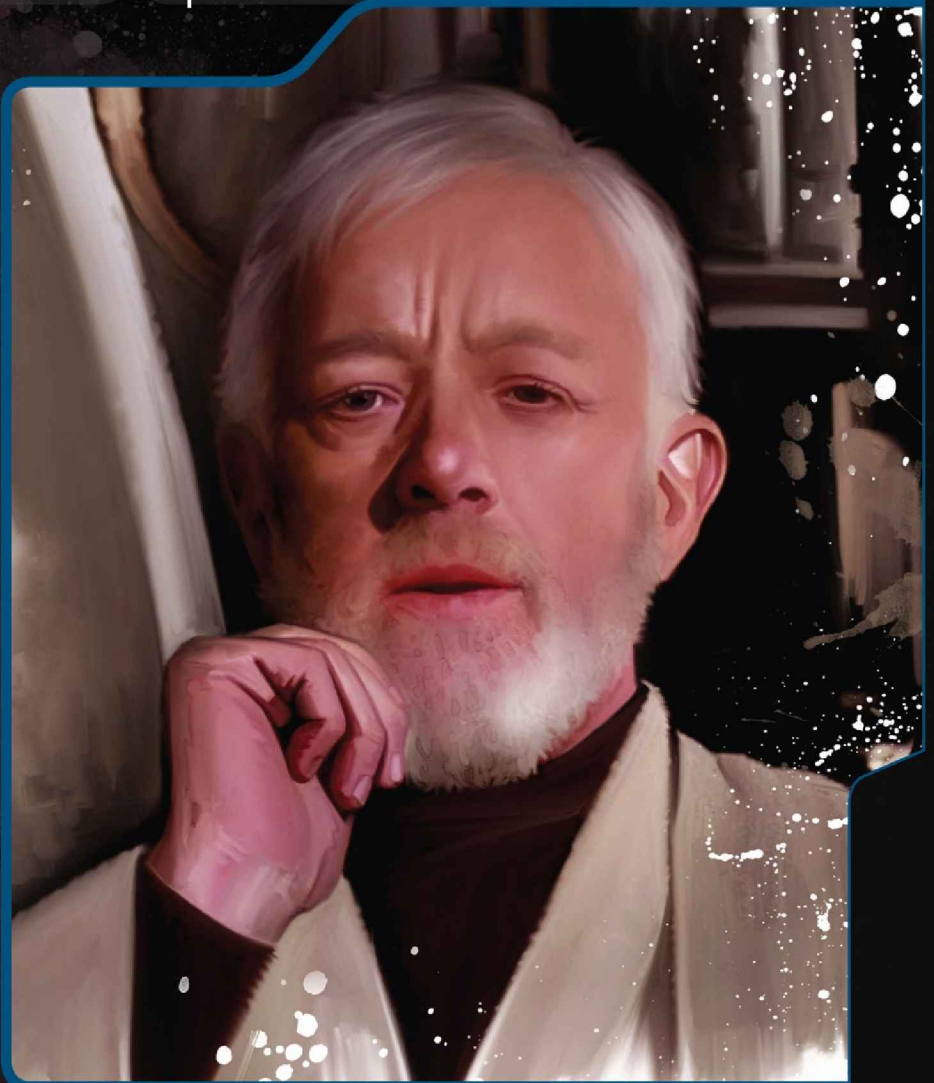
"Of course I know him. He's *me*," the old man said.

Luke and the droids followed Obi-Wan back to his home, where

the old man told Luke more about his past.

“I was once a Jedi Knight, the same as your father,” Obi-Wan said, remembering. “He was the best star pilot

in the galaxy, and a cunning warrior.” The old man continued, “And he was a good friend. Which reminds me, I have something here for you. Your father wanted you to have this when you were old enough, but your uncle wouldn’t allow it.” Obi-Wan handed Luke his father’s lightsaber.



“What is it?” Luke asked as he instinctively ignited the glowing blue blade.

“This is the weapon of a Jedi Knight. An elegant weapon, for a more civilized age,” Obi-Wan began. “For over a thousand generations, the Jedi Knights were guardians of peace and justice in the Old Republic. Before the dark times, before the Empire.”

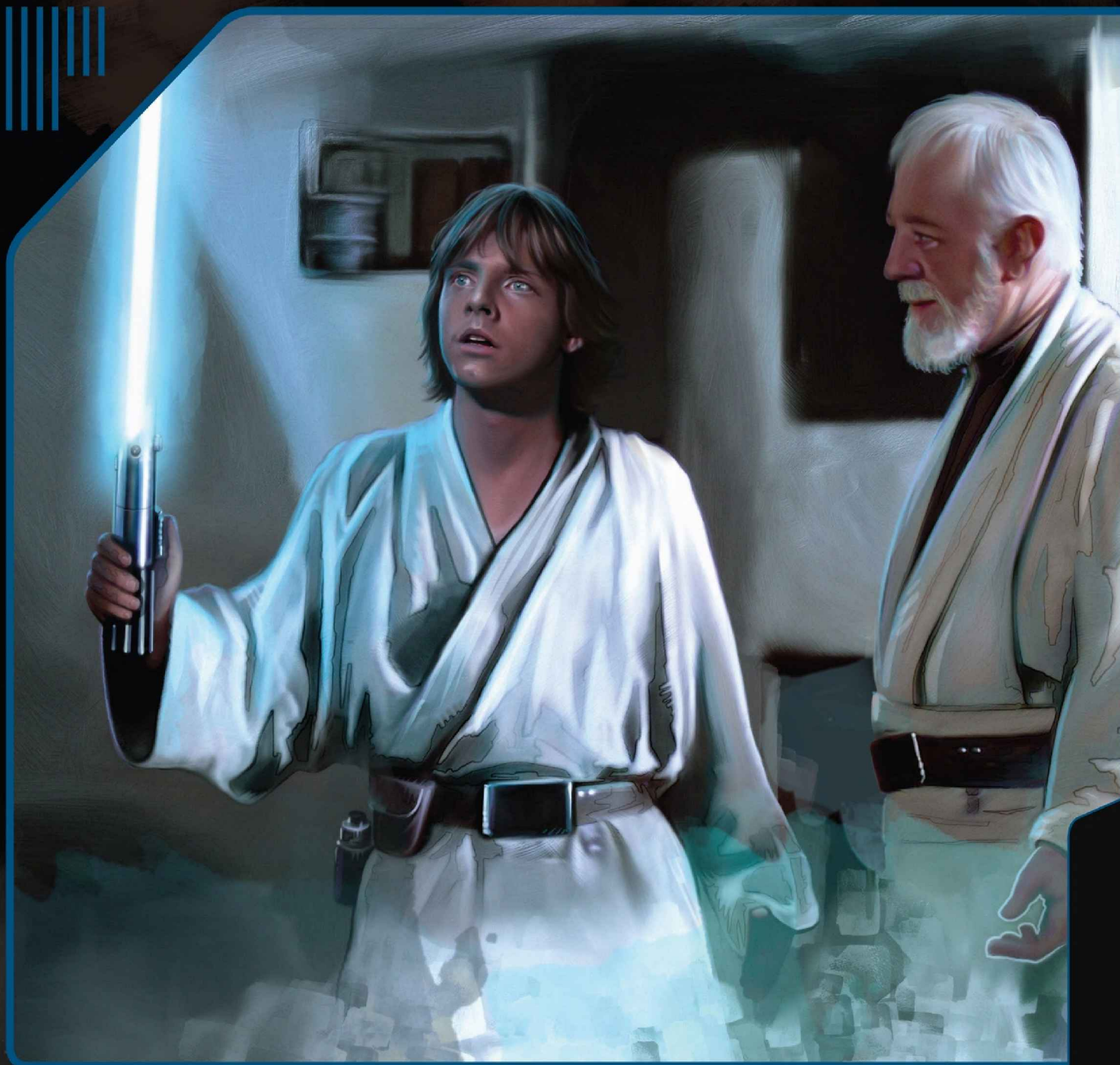
“How did my father die?” Luke asked.

“A young Jedi named Darth Vader, who was a pupil of mine until he turned to evil, helped the Empire hunt down and destroy the Jedi Knights. He betrayed and murdered your father. Vader was seduced by the dark side of the Force.”

Luke took a moment to consider this. He wanted to know more. “The Force?”

“The Force is what gives a Jedi his power,” Obi-Wan Kenobi explained. “It’s an energy field created by all living things. It binds the galaxy together.”

THE HERO'S JOURNEY BEGINS





Luke reminded the old man about the important message. Just as Obi-Wan was about to inspect R2-D2, the droid began playing the message, this time in full. The hologram of the girl once again spoke: “General Kenobi, years ago you served my father in the Clone Wars. Now he begs you to help him in his struggle against the Empire.”

The rest of the message explained that secret information—vital to the Rebellion—was stored in R2-D2, who needed to be taken to the distant planet Alderaan. It was up to Obi-Wan to help. He asked Luke to join him, but Luke said no. He was already in trouble, and he had work to do.

“You must do what you feel is right,” Obi-Wan said, disappointed.

Luke offered to take Obi-Wan to the nearest spaceport. But on their way, the pair ran into the wreckage of the Jawas’ sandcrawler. After a closer look, Obi-Wan realized it was an attack not from the Tusken Raiders but from Imperial stormtroopers.

THE HERO'S JOURNEY BEGINS

“But why would Imperial troops want to slaughter Jawas?” Luke asked. Then he realized—they were looking for the droids! “That would lead them back . . . home!”

Luke jumped into the landspeeder and rushed home. But it was too late. His home had been destroyed, and his aunt and uncle had been killed.



“There is nothing you could have done had you been there,” Obi-Wan said, trying to console Luke. But Luke was angry. He was also determined.

“I want to come with you to Alderaan. There’s nothing here for me now.” Luke took a deep breath. “I want to learn the ways of the Force and become a Jedi like my father.”



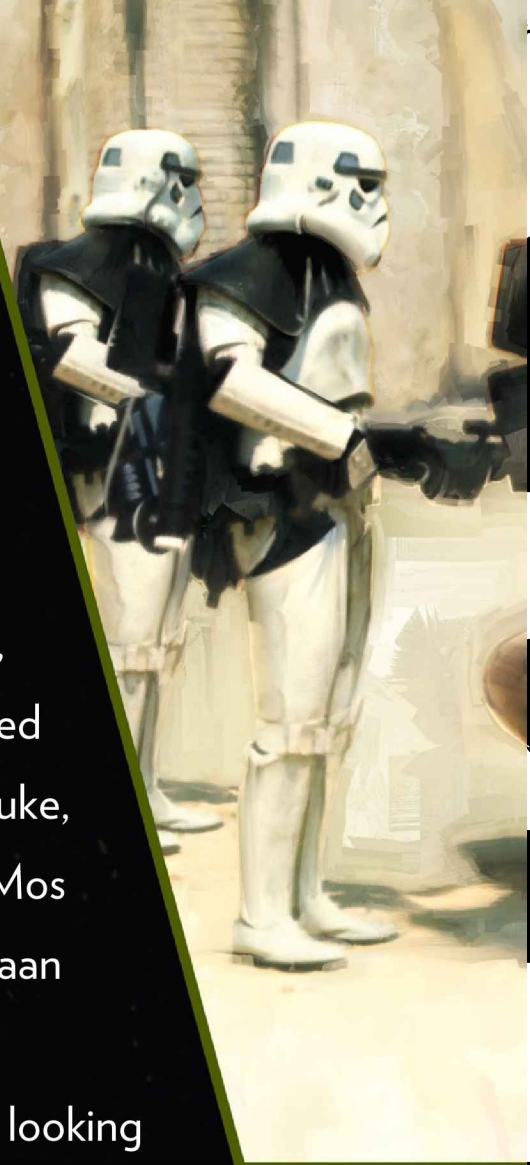


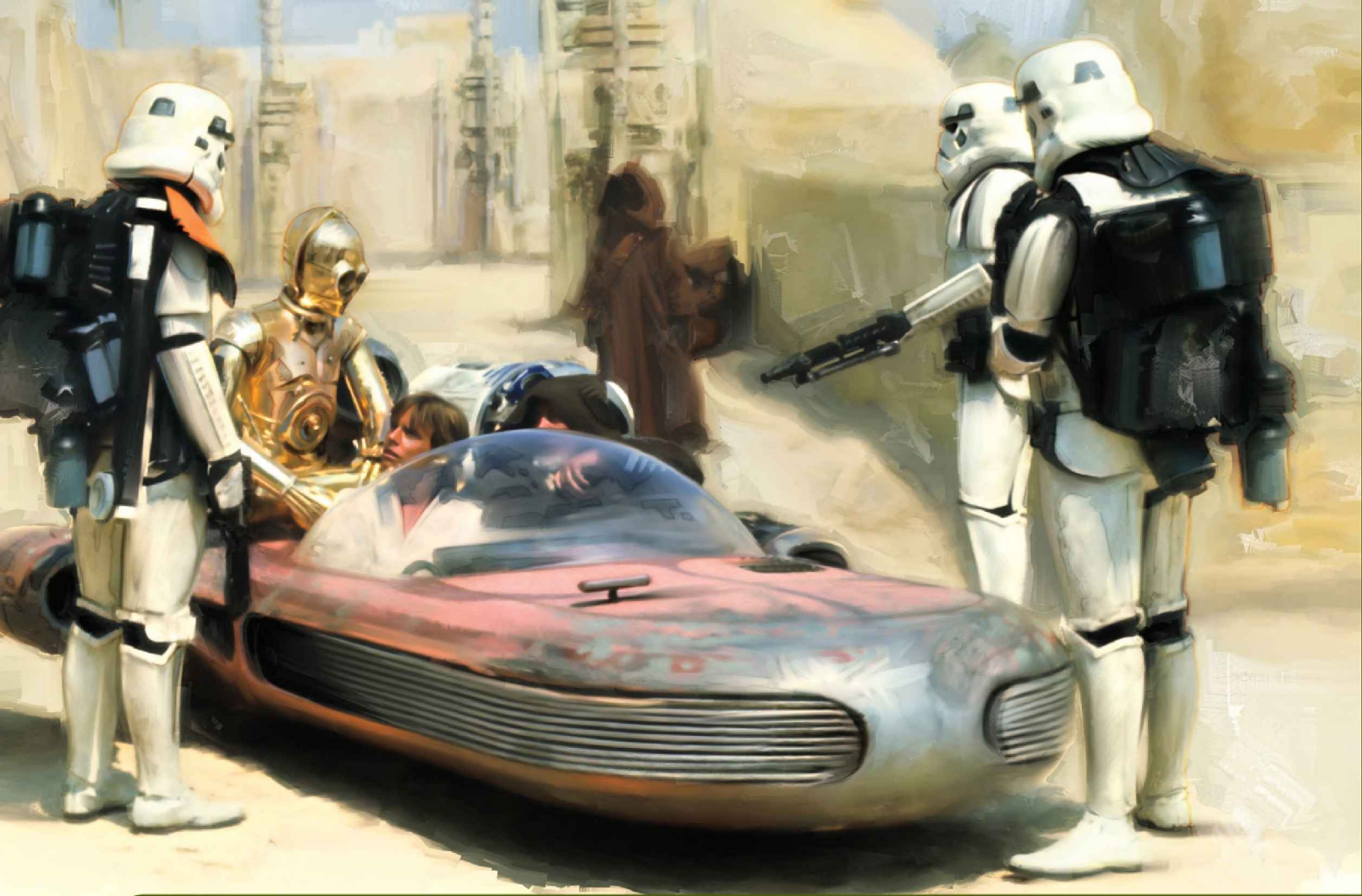
A Bad Feeling About This

When Luke Skywalker bought R2-D2 and C-3PO to help out around his farm, he had no idea they would change his life forever. R2-D2 had shown him an urgent distress call from Princess Leia, a leader in the Rebellion against the Empire, which led him to an old Jedi named Obi-Wan Kenobi. Now Luke, Obi-Wan, and the two droids were on their way to Mos Eisley spaceport. From there they could fly to Alderaan and help the Rebels fight the evil Galactic Empire.

Luke knew that the Empire's stormtroopers were looking for R2 and C-3PO, and he was nervous about getting caught.

As they entered Mos Eisley, a team of troopers stopped Luke's group to look at the two droids. Obi-Wan used his Jedi powers as he waved his hand, claiming, "These aren't the droids you're looking for."





“These aren’t the droids we’re looking for,” the stormtrooper echoed to Obi-Wan.

“He can go about his business,” Obi-Wan said.

“You can go about your business,” the stormtrooper repeated.

Luke was amazed. It was the first time he had seen someone use the Force so powerfully.



They had made it to Mos Eisley! But now they needed a pilot and a ship to take them to Alderaan. Luke and Obi-Wan found a nearby cantina and began their search. But no place in Mos Eisley was friendly. Ponda Baba,

a fearsome thug, and his friend Dr. Evazan picked a fight with them.

“You just watch yourself,” Evazan said. “We’re wanted men!” Obi-Wan drew his lightsaber to defend Luke. Everyone in the cantina knew that someone with a lightsaber was sure to be a Jedi Knight and, therefore, not someone that they wanted to fight. After that, no one else bothered Obi-Wan and Luke. Once again, the Force had saved them.

Obi-Wan found Chewbacca, a Wookiee pilot who spoke in roars and grunts. He took Luke and Obi-Wan to meet Han Solo, the smug pilot of the *Millennium Falcon*.

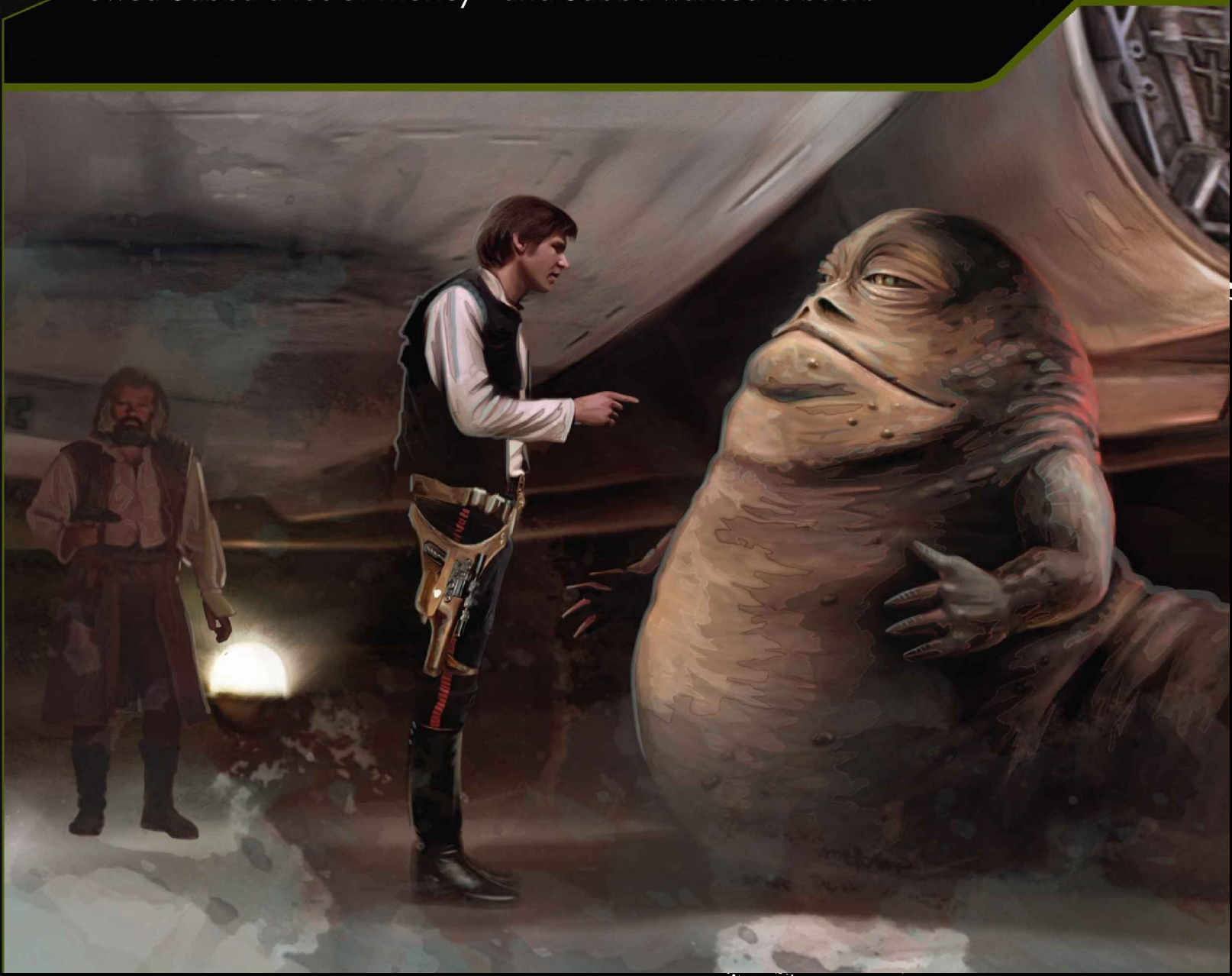
Obi-Wan told Han that they needed a fast ship. “Let’s just say, we’d like to avoid any Imperial entanglements.”

Solo smiled and said, “Well, that’s the real trick, isn’t it? And it’s going to cost you something extra.”

They made an expensive deal and agreed to meet soon at the *Millennium Falcon*’s docking bay.



But when Han and Chewbacca returned to the *Millennium Falcon*, they found Jabba the Hutt waiting for them in the hangar. Han owed Jabba a lot of money—and Jabba wanted it back!



“Look, Jabba, I just need a little more time.” The money Han was about to earn from helping Luke and Obi-Wan would easily cover the debt.

Jabba agreed to give Han one last chance—if Han paid him extra!

As Han boarded the *Falcon*, he smirked and said, “Jabba, you’re a wonderful human being.”



Later, Luke, Obi-Wan, and the droids arrived at the *Millennium Falcon's* docking bay. Shocked at how dirty and old the *Falcon* looked, Luke sputtered, "What a piece of junk!"

Han, only a little defensively, said, "She may not look like much, but she's got it where it counts, kid."

Their bickering was cut short when a team of stormtroopers arrived and started blasting. Someone in the cantina must have told the Empire about them! The heroes ran aboard the *Falcon* and quickly made the jump to hyperspace.



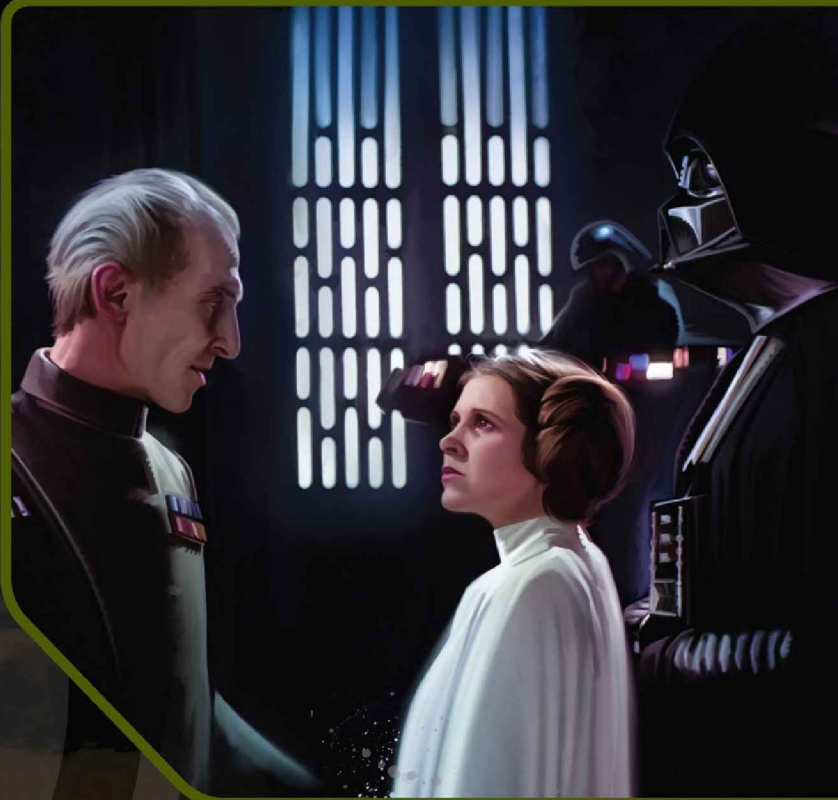
Meanwhile, Princess Leia had been taken prisoner aboard the Death Star—the Empire’s powerful space station. Darth Vader and Grand Moff Tarkin tried to scare her into telling them the location of the Rebel base. “I have decided to test this station’s destructive power on your home planet of Alderaan,” Tarkin said.

Leia pleaded: “No, Alderaan is peaceful. We have no weapons!”

“You would prefer another target? Then name the system!”

“Dantooine. The base is on Dantooine,” Leia lied.

Even though Tarkin believed her, he decided to destroy Alderaan anyway. He wanted to demonstrate, once and for all, the power of the Empire.





On board the *Millennium Falcon*, Obi-Wan felt a disturbance in the Force. “I fear something terrible has happened.”

They were still hours from Alderaan, so Obi-Wan was using the time to begin Luke’s Jedi training. He taught Luke how to block a floating droid’s laser blasts with his father’s lightsaber.

Once Luke had mastered that, Obi-Wan put a helmet over Luke’s head, with the thick blast shield covering his eyes.

Luke nervously said, “But with the blast shield down, I can’t see. How am I supposed to fight?”

“Your eyes can deceive you,” Obi-Wan said. “Don’t trust them.” Luke let go of his conscious self and acted on instinct alone. Even without being able to see, Luke was able to deflect the droid’s laser blasts with his lightsaber.

“You know, I did feel something,” Luke said. He was thrilled that he may have touched the Force himself.





When the *Millennium Falcon* came out of hyperspace, they found themselves in an asteroid field. “Our position is correct, except . . . no Alderaan!” Han said, confused.

As the *Falcon* flew through the asteroids, Han spotted what he thought was a small moon.

Luke, overcome with a sense of dread, said, “I have a very bad feeling about this.”

As the group came closer, they realized it wasn’t a moon at all. It was the most massive and frightening space station ever built—the Death Star.

Before they could fly away, the Death Star trapped them in a tractor beam. Even with the *Falcon*’s reverse thrusters on full power, the ship could not break free from the Death Star’s pull. Han knew the stormtroopers would search the ship and take everyone prisoner. But Obi-Wan had a plan. . . .



Much to the stormtroopers' surprise, they did not find anyone on board the *Millennium Falcon*. The heroes had hidden inside smuggling compartments beneath the *Falcon's* hall floor! They were safe for now, but with Alderaan destroyed and the *Falcon* captured by the Empire, Luke thought his adventure was over.

He didn't realize that even then the Force was guiding them. As Luke would soon learn, Princess Leia was also aboard the Death Star. That meant a new rescue mission for Luke—and a glimmer of hope for the Rebel Alliance.





The Rescue of Princess Leia



Luke Skywalker had left Tatooine because he wanted to become a hero. He had imagined himself delivering the Empire's stolen plans to Princess Leia on Alderaan. Then he would train with Obi-Wan Kenobi and become a great Jedi Knight. With the Force on his side, he might even help the Rebellion defeat the Empire.

But now Alderaan was a pile of rubble, and Luke, Obi-Wan, and their friends Han Solo, Chewbacca, R2-D2, and C-3PO were trapped inside the Empire's powerful Death Star. By dressing Luke and Han up as stormtroopers, they had all managed to avoid capture. But if they ever hoped to escape, they would need to turn off the tractor beam that was keeping their ship, the *Millennium Falcon*, stuck there.

Obi-Wan volunteered for the task. "I must go alone," he said, turning to Luke. "Your destiny lies along a different path than mine."

Luke sadly watched his mentor leave. What had Obi-Wan's words meant?

Luke's thoughts were interrupted by a series of frantic beeps from R2-D2. The little astromech droid had tapped into one of the Death Star's terminals, looking for any information that might help them.

C-3PO translated. "He says, 'I found her,' and keeps repeating, 'She's here.'"

"Who's here?" Luke asked.

"Princess Leia."

The princess was imprisoned on the Death Star! Luke immediately thought of a plan to rescue her. He and Han would pretend to be stormtrooper guards and take Chewbacca down to the prison level. They would say they were transferring the Wookiee to a new cell. But once they were inside the prison, they would free Princess Leia and escape.





Chewbacca howled nervously as Han and Luke led him onto the prison level. In front of a long row of cells stood four Imperial officers.

“Where are you taking that . . . thing?” one of them asked.

“Prisoner transfer,” Luke explained, sweating beneath his helmet.

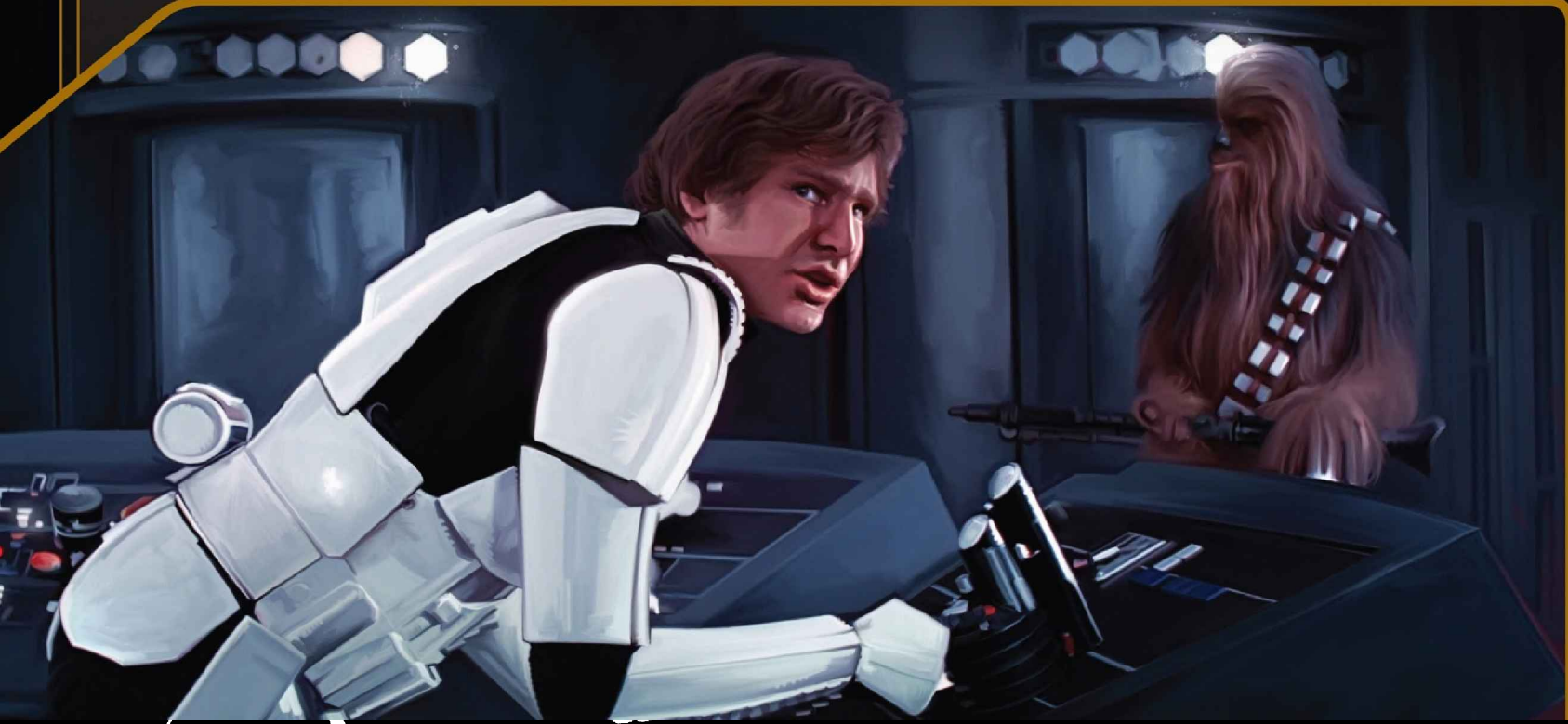
“I wasn’t notified. I’ll have to clear it.”

Before the officer could call for backup, Chewbacca attacked the surprised soldiers. Luke and Han joined him, and soon they had taken down everyone who stood in their way.

But their blaster fire set off an alarm. Luke ran to find Leia as Han answered the beeping intercom. “Uh, situation normal. We’re all fine here, now, thank you. . . . How are you?” Han asked weakly.

“We’re sending a squad up,” an authoritative voice answered with suspicion.

Han decided to solve this problem the same way he solved most problems: he fired his blaster at the intercom. “Boring conversation anyway,” Han muttered. “Luke! We’re gonna have company!”





Luke quickly opened the door to Princess Leia's cell and ran inside. There sat a woman cloaked in a long white dress.

"Aren't you a little short for a stormtrooper?" she asked.

Luke tilted his head in confusion. Those were not the first words he had expected to hear from the princess! Then he realized he was still wearing his bulky helmet. He pulled it off immediately. "I'm Luke Skywalker. I'm here to rescue you!"

The pair ran from the cell, but Han and Chewbacca were already busy holding off a platoon of stormtroopers at the entrance to the prison. Han and Chewbacca fell back to Leia's cell to regroup.

"When you came in here, didn't you have a plan for getting out?" Leia asked in disbelief.

Neither Luke nor Han had a good answer for Leia's question. In response to their silence, Leia grabbed Luke's gun and shot a hole in a nearby grate. "Somebody has to save our skins. Into the garbage chute!"

Without hesitation, Leia leaped through the open grate.

"Either I'm going to kill her or I'm beginning to like her," Han said as Chewbacca and Luke followed Leia down the chute.



THE RESCUE OF PRINCESS LEIA



Han fired a few more shots at the charging stormtroopers, then dove headfirst after his friends. He landed in a narrow room with tall, metallic walls—filled with piles of stinking garbage. There was one door on the far end of the room, but it was magnetically sealed. They were trapped in another dead end!

“It could be worse,” Leia suggested.

Suddenly, a burbling growl filled the air.

“It’s worse,” Han replied.

“There’s something alive in here,” Luke said, looking carefully around the room. The water rippled threateningly next to Luke’s leg.

“Look!” As Luke pointed, a giant tentacle rose up and pulled him down into the murky water. “Blast it!” Luke shouted to his friends as he struggled to keep his head above water. But Han couldn’t get a clear shot, and Luke was soon pulled below the waves again. Slowly the water stilled, as if Luke had never been there at all.









“Luke!” Leia cried desperately. As if in answer to her cry, Luke suddenly resurfaced. “What happened?” she asked.

“It let go of me and disappeared,” Luke explained with a confused expression. Why would the creature give up so easily?

A metallic creak echoed through the garbage room. The walls were closing in! This wasn’t only a garbage storage room—it was a garbage masher.

“Don’t just stand there!” Leia shouted. “Try and brace it with something.”





But nothing helped. The walls got closer and closer.

“One thing’s for sure. We’re all going to be a lot thinner!” Han said hopelessly.

Then Luke had an idea. R2-D2 and C-3PO! If he could reach the droids on his suit’s comlink, they might be able to turn off the garbage masher.

“Threepio!” he shouted into the comlink.

“Are you there, sir?” C-3PO replied.

“Shut down all the garbage mashers on the detention level!”

C-3PO heard the panic in Luke’s voice and immediately told R2-D2 to interface with the Death Star’s systems. “Hurry!”

Through the comlink, C-3PO could hear the mechanical din as the walls got closer and closer. Then the sounds of Luke, Leia, and Han crying out overwhelmed the comlink.

“They’re dying, Artoo! Curse my metal body! I wasn’t fast enough.”

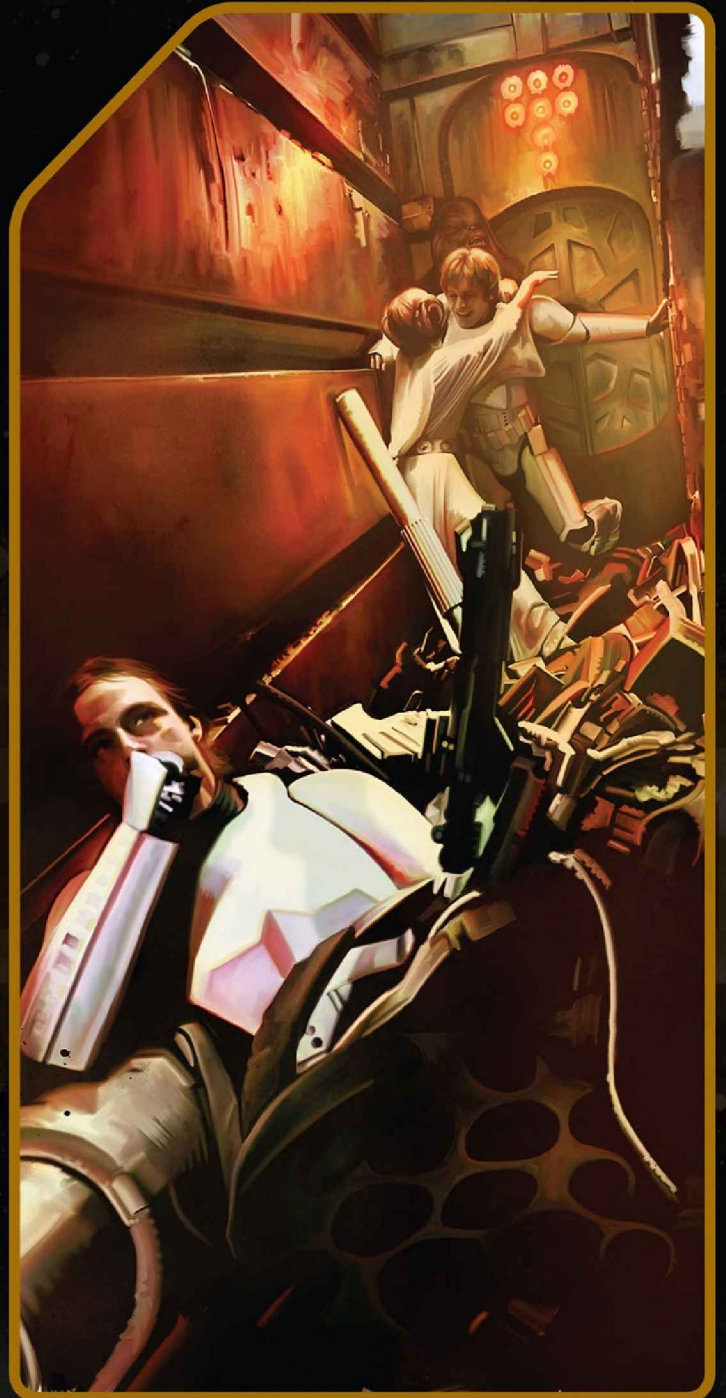
C-3PO shook his head in sadness.

“Threepio, we’re all right!”

Luke’s voice came in loud and clear. The cries C-3PO had heard had been cheers of joy. The droids had stopped the walls just in time!

Now R2 could open the room’s sealed door.

Luke looked back at his friends. They had faced death more than once that day. Yet whenever things had looked darkest, one of them had been able to come up with a plan. Being a hero was not like Luke had thought it would be. With great friends at his side, it was even better.

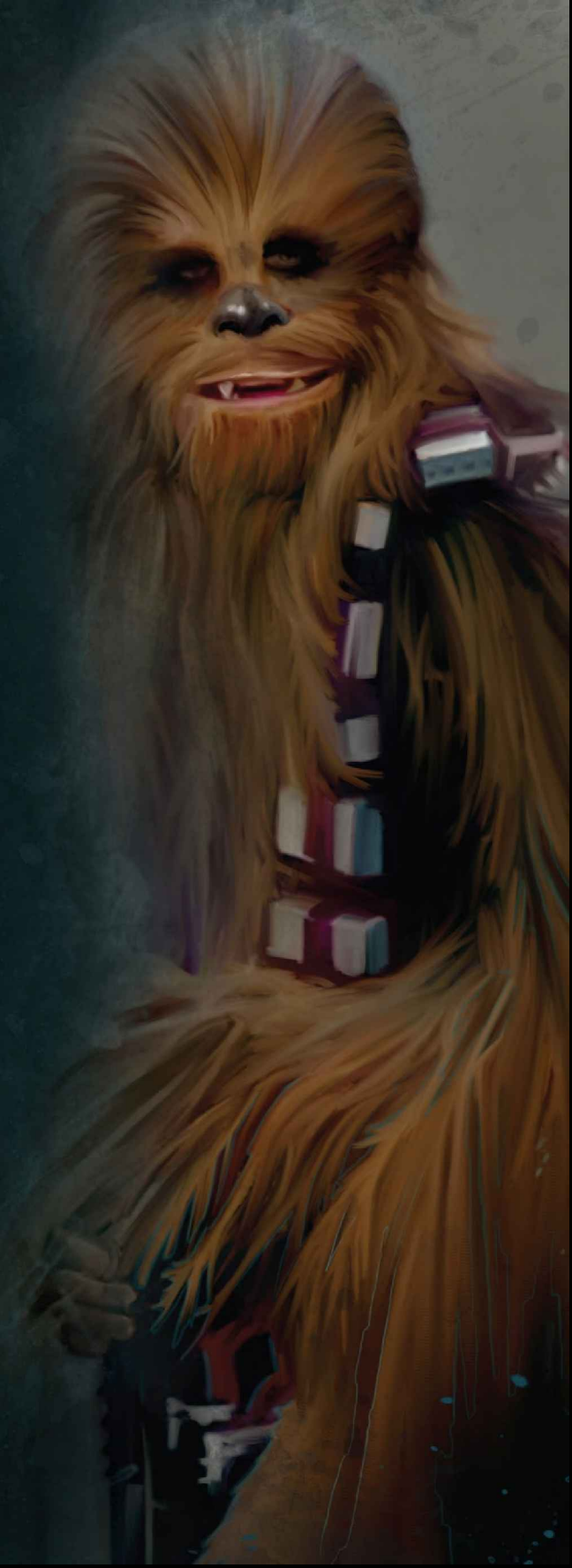




Escape from the Death Star

Luke Skywalker, Han Solo, and Chewbacca had done what seemed impossible: they had rescued the Rebel leader Princess Leia from her prison on board the Empire's space station—the Death Star. But now they faced what might be an even *bigger* challenge: getting past the stormtroopers who stood between them and the *Millennium Falcon*.

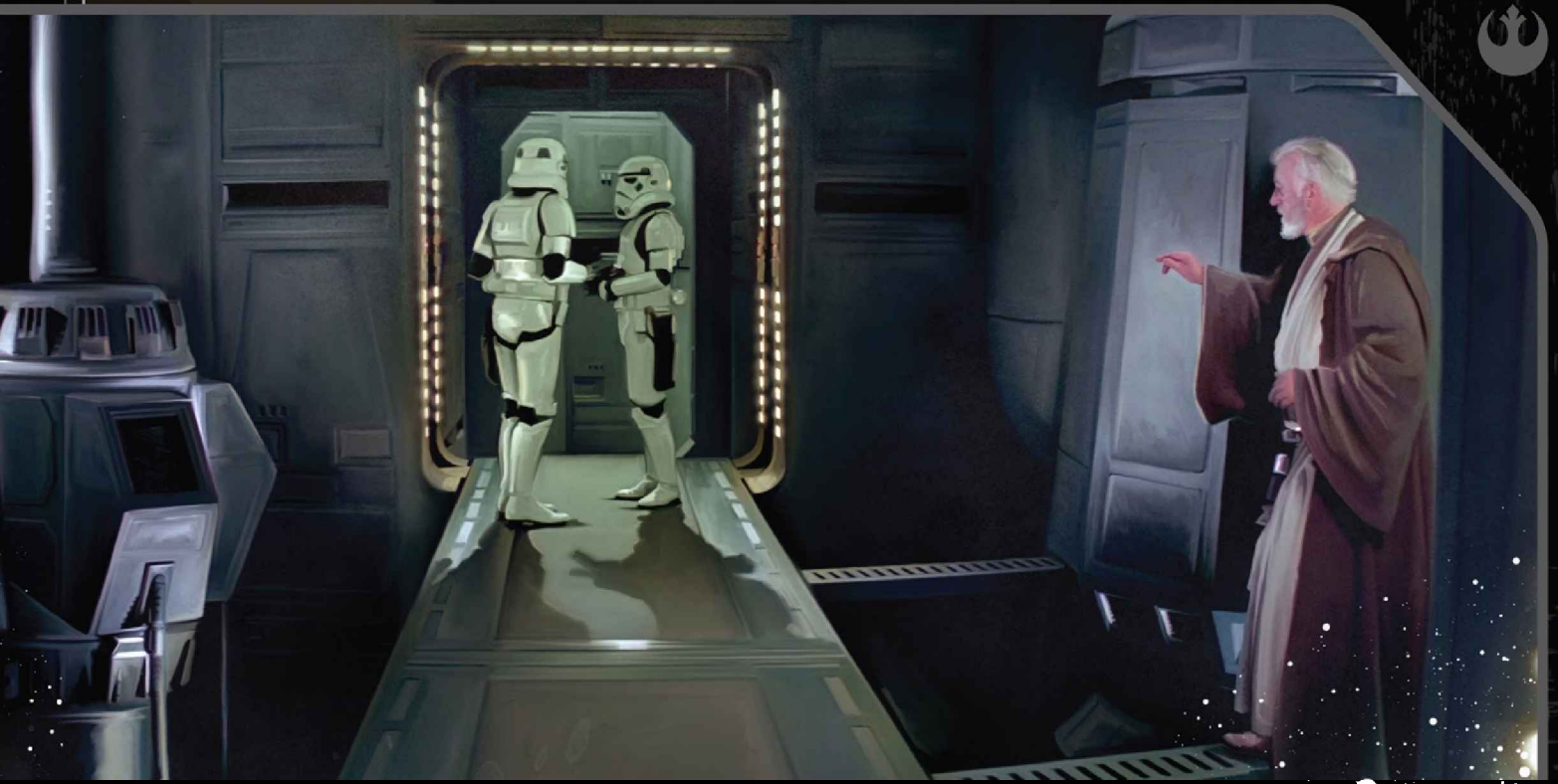
Leia was eager to escape from the Death Star and get back to her friends in the Rebel Alliance. Stuck behind the slow-moving Chewbacca, she grumbled, “Will somebody get this big walking carpet out of my way?” and pushed past the Wookiee.





While his young friends had gone to rescue Leia, Obi-Wan Kenobi's mission was to turn off the tractor beam that kept the *Millennium Falcon* trapped on the Death Star. Obi-Wan could have easily taken out the tractor beam's guards with his lightsaber, but the Jedi chose a different path.

Using his mastery of the Force, Obi-Wan made the stormtroopers think they heard a noise. While they looked away to see what was going on, Obi-Wan was able to turn off the tractor beam.



ESCAPE FROM THE DEATH STAR



Now he just had to get back to the ship, and he and his friends could get away from the Death Star!

Meanwhile, Luke and the others reached a window overlooking the captive *Millennium Falcon*. Han hated to see his ship grounded and surrounded by stormtroopers.

“You came in that thing?” asked Leia, surprised at the *Millennium Falcon*’s beat-up condition. “You’re braver than I thought!”




Using his communicator, Luke told the droids C-3PO and R2-D2 to meet them by the ship. But before his group could take more than a few steps, a patrol of stormtroopers spotted them and attacked!

“Get back to the ship!” Han yelled as he and Chewbacca ran toward the stormtroopers, blasters firing.







Luke and Leia ran toward the *Falcon's* docking bay. But when they turned the corner, another platoon of stormtroopers was waiting for them!

The pair tried to escape through a door that they thought would lead to safety, but instead they found a gap that was too big to jump across.

“I think we took a wrong turn!”
Luke said.

With the stormtroopers right behind him and Leia, Luke blasted the door's controls, sealing it shut!



ESCAPE FROM THE DEATH STAR


Leia knew the door wouldn't hold off the soldiers for long. "Quick! Find the controls that extend the bridge."

Luke looked at the smoking switches beside the door. "I think I just blasted it."

With time running out, Luke looked through his belt and found a grappling hook. He quickly looped it around a pipe overhead!







Luke lifted Leia in his arms. She kissed him on the cheek for luck as they swung across to the other side.



Luke and Leia were safe, but the stormtroopers were still chasing Han and Chewie! As the pair ran down a long hallway, the stormtroopers tried to cut off their escape route by closing a thick set of blast doors.

But with a burst of speed, Chewbacca and Han made it through the closing doors with only seconds to spare. Now it was the stormtroopers who were caught behind the sealed doors!



While his friends were making their way to the *Millennium Falcon*, Obi-Wan had successfully avoided the stormtroopers. But as he neared the hangar, he sensed something . . . a presence he knew he might face on the Death Star.

Obi-Wan pulled out his lightsaber and inched forward until he finally saw . . . Darth Vader!

The Dark Lord of the Sith was waiting with his red lightsaber drawn. “I’ve been waiting for you, Obi-Wan. When I left you, I was but the learner. Now I am the master.”

“Only a master of evil, Darth,” Obi-Wan replied.

As Vader attacked, Obi-Wan matched the Sith Lord’s lightsaber thrusts, moving with the ease and speed of a Jedi Knight.

But Vader was more physically powerful than the Jedi Master, and he soon gained the advantage over Obi-Wan.

“Your powers are weak, old man,” Vader taunted.

But the Jedi Knight was unafraid. “You can’t win, Darth. If you strike me down, I shall become more powerful than you can possibly imagine.”

In a deep, threatening voice, Vader replied, “You should not have come back.”







In the hangar, just steps away from where Obi-Wan and Vader were fighting, Luke and Leia caught up with Chewbacca and Han. R2-D2 and C-3PO arrived moments later.

Luke saw Obi-Wan Kenobi fighting Darth Vader—their lightsabers crackling as they connected.

Out of the corner of his eye, Obi-Wan saw that Luke and his friends had rescued Princess Leia and were ready to escape the Death Star. Smiling peacefully, he stopped fighting and closed his eyes.

With a swift motion, Vader swung his lightsaber, slicing through the spot where Obi-Wan stood! But the old Jedi had vanished at that very instant, leaving nothing but his dusty cloak and his weapon behind.

“No!” shouted Luke in surprise. The noise attracted the stormtroopers’ attention. When they saw the escaped Rebels in the hangar, they opened fire!





Han and Chewie led Leia and the droids up the gangplank to the *Falcon* as even more stormtroopers arrived. Luke stayed outside the ship, firing wildly. He no longer cared about his own safety. But suddenly, he heard Obi-Wan's voice in his head.

Run, Luke. Run! the Jedi said, urging Luke to get on board.

Luke reached the *Falcon* just as Han and Chewie started the engines. With the tractor beam disabled, the ship raced away from the Death Star!

Although they had gotten off the Death Star, the *Falcon* still had to get past the space station's sentry ships!

Leia and Chewbacca piloted the ship past the TIE fighters while Luke and Han tried to shoot down any ships they couldn't avoid. The *Falcon* shook as blast after blast hit it. Han, confident in his beloved *Millennium Falcon*, boasted, "Don't worry. She'll hold together." Then he whispered to the ship, "Hear me, baby? Hold together."





As the *Falcon* got farther away from the Death Star, Luke and Han began to win the battle with the TIE fighters.

“Got him! I got him!” yelled Luke happily after blowing up another TIE. Soon Han and Luke had shot down all the remaining ships, and the *Falcon* entered hyperspace. They were on their way to the Rebel base at last.

Truly, the Force was with them.



The Battle of Yavin



THE BATTLE OF YAVIN



Luke Skywalker still couldn't believe it. Just days before, he had been living on Tatooine, thinking he'd be stuck there forever. But now, there he was, worlds away on Yavin's fourth moon. He was going to help the Rebel Alliance destroy the Galactic Empire's greatest weapon: the Death Star. But the space station's weak spot would be very hard to hit—it was only two meters wide!

Luke reassured the other pilots: "I used to bull's-eye womp rats in my T-16 back home. They're not much bigger than two meters."

The Rebels had to move fast. The Death Star was quickly making its way toward Yavin 4. One blast from the Death Star could destroy an entire planet in just seconds.

On board the Death Star, Darth Vader was feeling confident. Earlier, he had defeated Obi-Wan Kenobi, the great Jedi leader.

"This will be a day long remembered," Darth Vader told Death Star commander Grand Moff Tarkin. "It has seen the end of Kenobi. It will soon see the end of the Rebellion."



Luke quickly suited up in his orange Rebel pilot's uniform. As he made his way to his X-wing fighter, he saw Han Solo and Chewbacca loading up their ship, the *Millennium Falcon*. Han and Chewie had helped Luke bring the Death Star plans to the Rebel base. They weren't Rebels—just smugglers who needed some fast money.

"Why don't you stay and fight with us?" Luke asked.

"What good's a reward if you ain't around to use it?" Han replied.

Luke walked away from Han and boarded his X-wing, shaking his head.



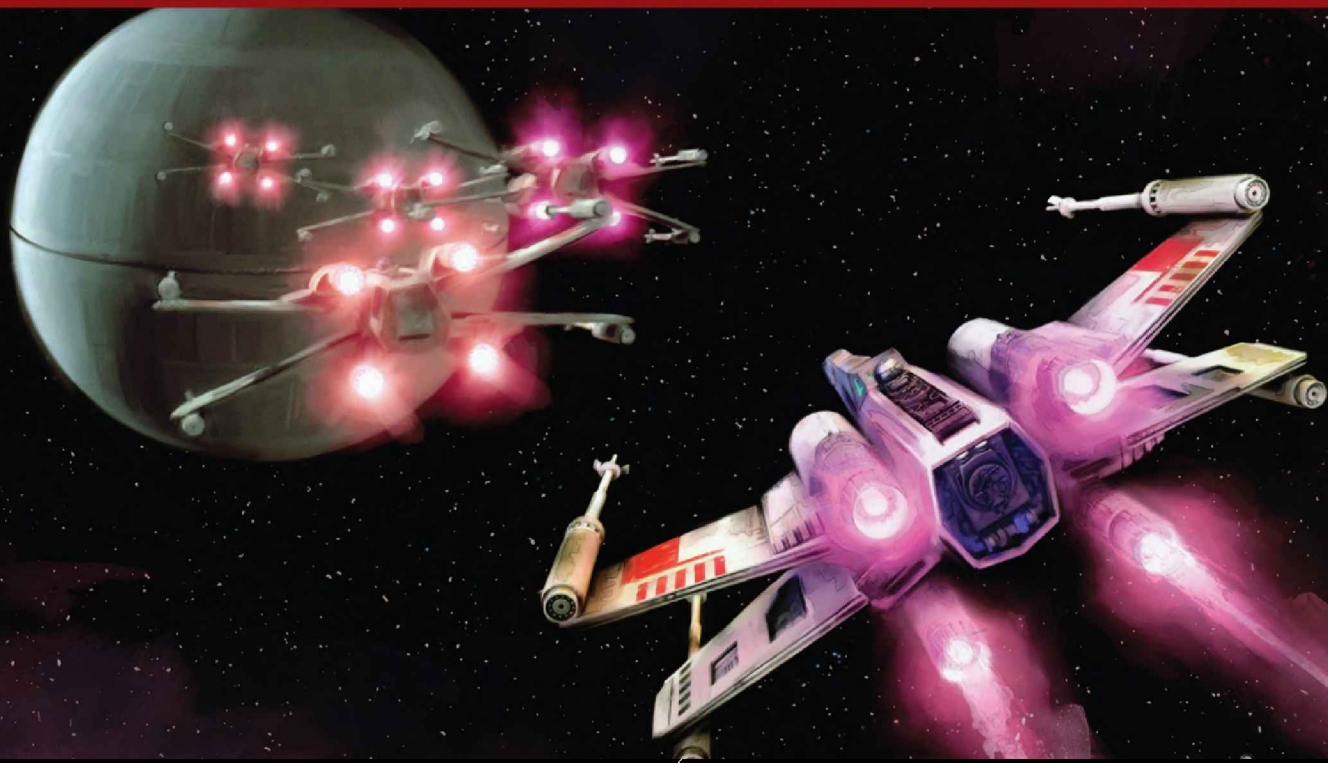


On command, the fighters took off. Luke flew with the Red Squadron, along with Wedge and his old friend Biggs from Tatooine.

Then he heard a voice—but it wasn't over the comm system. It was inside his head.

Luke, the Force will be with you.

The voice sounded like . . . Obi-Wan's? But Luke didn't have time to think. The Death Star came into view. It looked like a quiet metal moon, but it was designed to be the ultimate weapon.





Zap! Zap! Zap! The darkness of space lit up with the green fire of lasers as the Death Star's cannons took aim at the Red Squadron. Luke quickly steered away from the attack. Luckily, the X-wings were designed to move with speed and agility.

Back in the Rebel base, Princess Leia and C-3PO anxiously watched the battle on a digital screen.

“This is Red Five. I’m going in,” Luke said. He dove toward the surface, firing at the cannons. The Death Star cannons responded with a storm of laser blasts.

“Luke, pull up!” Biggs warned him.



THE BATTLE OF YAVIN

Luke's blasts had damaged the surface of the Death Star, creating a huge burst of fire.

Luke had no choice but to fly through the flames. Biggs held his breath, until Luke emerged from the destruction—unhurt.

"I got a little cooked, but I'm okay," Luke reported.

Another message came in from the Rebel command center: "Enemy fighters coming your way!"

Luke checked his visual scanner. Six compact TIE fighters sped across the sky toward the Rebels.



A TIE fighter fired at one of the Red Squadron ships.

Boom! The X-wing exploded.

Another TIE fighter targeted Biggs. Luke swooped in to help his old friend. His targeting system locked on the TIE fighter.

Boom! Luke took it out before it could hit Biggs. Then another TIE fighter zapped Luke. “I’m hit, but not bad!” Luke said. “Artoo, see what you can do with it.”

The little droid quickly went to work on repairs as Luke dodged another fighter.



THE BATTLE OF YAVIN

A voice came over the comm system. “This is Gold Leader. We’re starting our attack run.”

The Gold Squadron’s Y-wing fighters streaked across the sky toward the Death Star’s surface. The Red Squadron tried to keep the TIE fighters busy with a skirmish. But more TIE fighters were on the way—and Darth Vader himself was piloting one of them!

Three Y-wing fighters entered the trench. They locked their targeting computers on the port.

Then the Death Star’s guns stopped. That could only mean one thing. The TIE fighters had entered the trench, too!





“I’ll take them myself,” Darth Vader said.
“Cover me!”

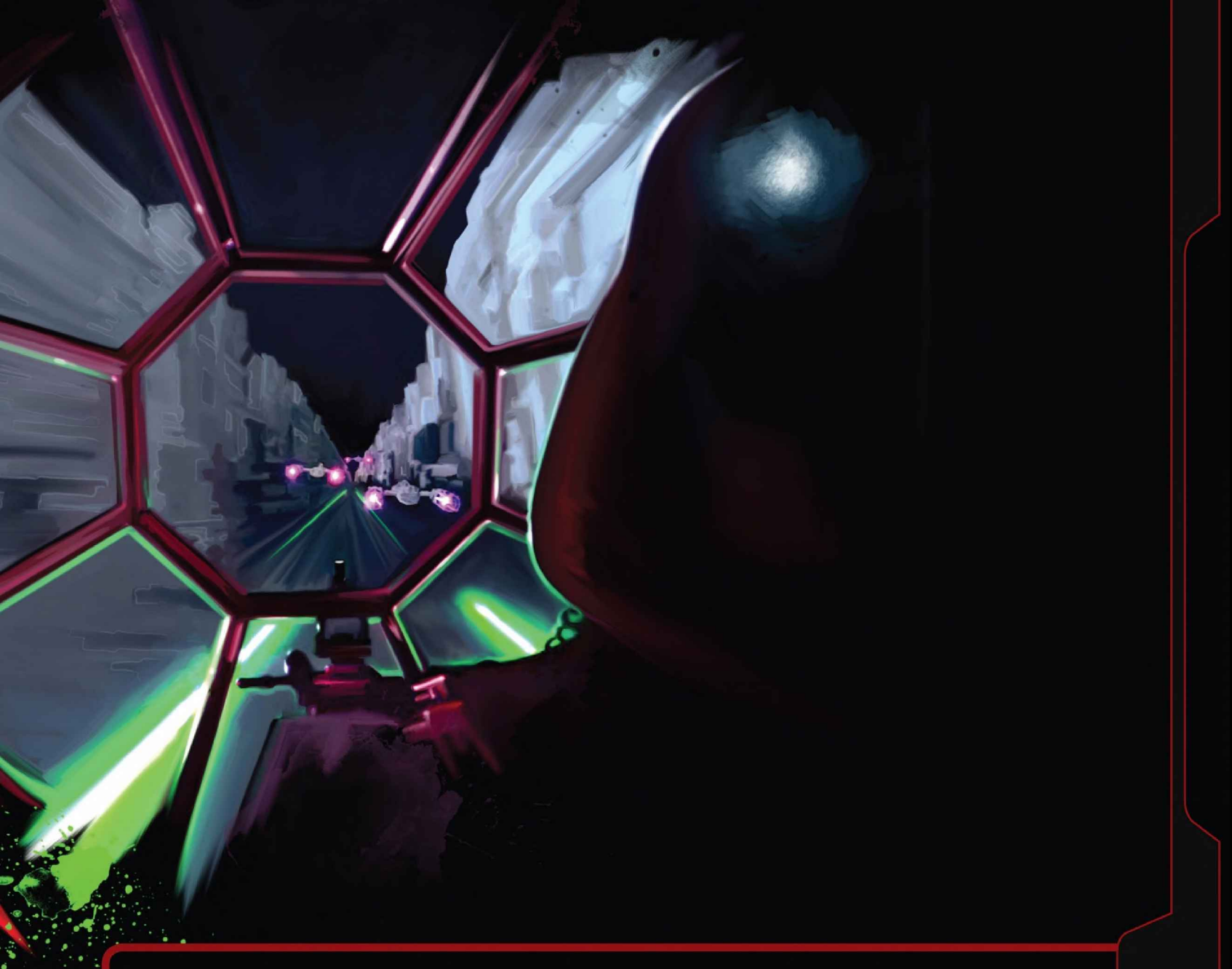
Red laser blasts fired from Vader’s TIE fighter. The expert pilot took down three Y-wings, one after another. The Gold Squadron had failed.

Luke’s heart sank as he watched the Y-wing fighters explode. The TIE fighters quickly retreated—but for how long?

Only six members of the Red Squadron remained. Red Leader flew into the trench with the Red Ten and Red Twelve pilots as backup. Luke, Wedge, and Biggs hung back.

Zoom! Commander Dreis led the charge through the trench. His targeting system locked on the port. But then, out of nowhere, three more TIE fighters swooped down from above like birds of prey. The sky lit up as they blasted Red Ten and Red Twelve out of existence.





Dreis clenched his teeth. He could still aim for the target. He released his torpedo. . . . *Boom!* It hit the Death Star. But it didn't hit the target.

“I lost an engine!” Dreis yelled over the comm. “Get set up for your attack run!”

It was all up to Luke, Wedge, and Biggs now.

But as their three X-wings entered the trench, a TIE fighter zapped Wedge’s X-wing.

“I’m hit! I can’t stay with you,” Wedge cried.

“Get clear!” Luke warned, and Wedge steered out of the trench.



THE BATTLE OF YAVIN

Inside his TIE fighter, Darth Vader kept his focus on Luke.

“The Force is strong with this one,” Vader said as Luke expertly dodged his attacks.

“Artoo, we need more power!” Luke told his droid.

Behind him, the three enemy fighters got closer and closer. Vader took aim at Biggs.

The sky filled with orange fire as Biggs’s fighter exploded.

Now Luke was the only pilot left who could destroy the Death Star.



Luke was almost in range. He was looking through the targeting scope when he heard Obi-Wan's voice again. *Use the Force, Luke.*

Luke hesitated. Could he do this without the scope? He didn't need it to take down the womp rats back home.

He turned off his targeting system.

Down in the trench, Darth Vader locked on Luke's X-wing fighter. But before Vader could fire . . . *bam!* A blast rocked his ship.

The *Millennium Falcon* swooped down, attacking the three TIE fighters. Han and Chewbacca had come back to help Luke!

"Yahoo!" Han cheered as he took out two of the ships. His next blast sent Darth Vader spiraling away into space.

Luke's fingers tightly gripped the thrusters of the X-wing. This was it. The Rebel Alliance's last chance.

The Force flowed through him. He could feel it now. At just the right moment, he fired his torpedoes. Then he flew away from the Death Star as fast as he could.





BOOM! The Death Star exploded into millions of pieces.

Back on Yavin 4, trumpets swelled in the headquarters of the Rebel Alliance. Princess Leia presented Luke and Han with medals of honor. It was a proud day for the Rebellion.

For the first time, they had won a major victory against the Galactic Empire. There was hope for the future.

A new chapter was about to begin.

